# Parents Also Grow

ZILPHA CARRUTHERS FRANKLIN

PARENTS can never be experts—at least not in the sense of the more or less accurate popular notion that an expert is "a person who gets to know more and more about less and less." The parent to a certain degree reverses this process, in that he starts with an irreducible minimum—a given child. And the more and more which he must learn must constantly be accepted or rejected, tested and applied in terms of this whole, the child with whom he both begins and ends.

This job of relating himself to the varied scientific inquiries into childhood is one of the most effective ways in which a parent may put into practice what Dr. Gesell might perhaps describe as a "philosophy of growth." The immediate implication of his editorial is that parents must keep step with forward-moving knowledge. For the parent to do this takes, so to speak, two moves. Somewhat paradoxically opposed to each other, these are:

Keeping informed as to standards of development, methods of training and all the manifold significant facts and theories which come from many sources, wherever in laboratory or clinic experts are adding to their own knowledge of children in general, *and*

Interpreting and utilizing these general standards and methods so that they contribute to the healthy development of the parent's own child in particular.

Neither one of these parental relationships to what is known about childhood is easy, or in a certain sense, ever possible of complete realization. Emerson, I think it was, who said that every generation of parents in order to be as good as *their* parents had been to them, must be better. Nowhere is this more evident than in what parents must know and how they must act in the light of this rapid expansion of interest in child development.

Things known about children, of which standards of growth and development are perhaps the most concrete, change in two ways. In the first place the standards themselves change, and what we have learned one year we shall probably have to modify the next. They change because new research is constantly adding new data and increasing the accuracy and detail of what is already known. For instance—studies of the amount of sleep needed by children in twenty-four hours show not only that the amount of sleep decreases with age—a fact which we all know—but that children do not necessarily need as much sleep as we have expected them to take. Dr. Florence Goodenough recently said that "Perhaps the most outstanding single finding is that the amount of sleep actually taken by children is, on the average, much less than the standards recommended by most specialists in child care and training. Since these standards have been based upon relatively little data, it seems quite probable that the recommended hours are in excess of the actual sleep requirements of the average healthy child."

From the parent's point of view there is something even more important than these continued increases and refinements of knowledge; this is the fact that not only the accuracy and detail of what we know about them, but the children themselves actually change. New knowledge and new methods do make their mark. Our generation of parents tends to accept without much questioning greater improvements in health than had been made in all previous history. Without always stopping to be acutely aware of what these things mean to us personally, we benefit by the drop in infant mortality, the wiping out of smallpox, the approaching disappearance of diphtheria, the new methods of preventing and combating other communicable diseases.

These are not the only tangible physical changes. I can remember when I was in college asking a gym teacher why all the girls I knew were taller than

their mothers. As I look back on it I am astonished that she could and did reply that this was either a mistake in observation or a coincidence. Today we mothers (who *are* taller than our mothers because we had better opportunity for physical development) are rearing children who are statistically known to be showing an increase in both height and weight for age. Dr. Thomas D. Wood of Teachers College, Columbia University, has pointed out that in his long experience with height-weight-age scales he has found it necessary to make modifications at both extremes. A wider range is now accepted as "normal," because, while even under increasingly favorable conditions some individual children remain constitutionally small, the majority are growing both taller and heavier at any given age than was found in the surveys of even ten years ago.

## Are Children Brighter?

We assume that what is true on the physical level is also in general true on the intellectual level. Not that we can say, as one now and then hears someone — usually a proud grandparent — remark, "Children are brighter than they used to be." For intellectual development we do not have the objective comparative measurements which can be made on the physical side. This is one of the fields in which research workers are going to give us a great deal more knowledge in the years soon to come. There is, however, already good evidence that the more favorable the opportunities for development and training, the more intelligently do children seem to *behave*. One piece of striking testimony which leads toward that conclusion is found in some recent work of Dr. Mandel Sherman of the Washington Child Research Center, who with his associates has gone into three progressively more isolated mountain settlements in Virginia. These careful comparative studies, based on what we consider usual in more favored environments, have shown astounding apparent drops, step by step as the community becomes more backward. Some of his findings are:

"The more isolated the community, the lower was the intelligence of the child.

"As the children became older, the difference between their chronological and mental age became greater.

"The I. Q. of children in the most highly developed community remained more constant than that of the children in the lowest community.

"The I. Q. jumped from fifteen to forty points when schooling was given, showing that the children had never received any environmental stimulation."

This is not the place to discuss the various theories advanced to explain or to modify these deductions. Whatever the reason for the situation he found, the story Dr. Sherman tells adds to our growing conviction that intellectual behavior, as well as physical development, may be bettered by ever better conditions of development. For if at one extreme these backward communities are made up of individuals who cannot meet the outside world on an equal footing, it is not altogether impossible to take steps at the other end of our present range and so to add progressive enrichment to children's lives.

As parents look on their children's world, the whole picture is one of change. What we say amounts to something like this, "I am told that as a parent I really ought to know all about these things, but I must on no account 'swallow them whole.' What I learn today I must be prepared to unlearn or modify tomorrow. And everything I learn about children in general I am warned against applying without interpreting it to fit my own child."

It would be silly not to admit that the prospect is rather staggering to the mother who is already as busy as she can well be. She has a right to ask, "What of it? I am not questioning the importance of all these new facts and ideas, but since you warn me to add so many grains of salt, I don't see why I should take them at all. Can't I leave them to you in the peace of your laboratory? I have plenty to do to keep my family fed and clothed and clean. Let the educators and the doctors and the psychologists go ahead, but don't expect me to be interested unless they can give me their knowledge, put up neatly and ready to use like a package of prepared cereal."

## The Challenge of Change

Actually the time to say *either-or* has gone; the opportunity to accept or reject change for our children has passed. Neither we nor they can ostrichwise escape contact with changing ideas. This is most obvious in relation to education; no parent can dodge the necessity of seeking to understand the new adventures of the schoolroom. Some of the ways in which both the philosophy and the practice of school living are being developed are suggested in the following discussions.

But at best this would seem a rather grudging way of cheering from the side lines. As a matter of fact we are called upon to play the game ourselves. And as parents we can find much needed guidance if we will try out its rules. For with the emphasis placed clearly on the individual child, the

experiments and experiences of those who work with children outside the home are growing richer and richer in usefulness within the home. In this issue of CHILD STUDY also appear three "Cross-Sections of Childhood"—at three, at eight and at thirteen—which are indicative of only one of the many immediate and practical ways in which the scientific study of childhood comes home.

These pictures of what is usual have a special usefulness as a realistic scale against which to weigh easily exaggerated parental hopes and fears. But they are not literally measuring sticks. We cannot do with children as the conscientious fisherman does with his trout—carry a tape line and throw back into the water every one that varies a hair's breadth from the prescribed measure. The range of expected individual variation in humankind is very wide so that there is no cause for concern if a child is low, even rather considerably, in certain particulars. Of course he should be helped to do his best, with emphasis on *his* rather than on someone else's "best."

But although wide variations are to be accepted as frequent and even usual, there are some children whose deviations from this usual development are sufficient to unfit them for success and happiness in the usual life of childhood. This raises so many and such serious questions that it cannot possibly be discussed here. In a new pamphlet on "Individual Differences" published by the Child Study Association those interested will find a fuller discussion and references to helpful books in related fields. But whatever the particular need or special promise of achievement, the principle remains the same—maturity, the ability to live fully and happily at any age, comes only on the basis of native endowment. This is not a pessimistic acceptance of blind fate, it is rather a willingness to shoulder parental responsibility to help the stuff of which the child is made develop to its own fulfillment.

And this is why, though the parent profits by his understanding of and cooperation with the expert, his own job retains its unique importance. His is the hand that must organize and integrate all these forces and potentialities, whether they are subtle or obvious, within the child or without in the child's world. He remains more like the artist than the scientist. The artist must know a great many things—anatomy, paints and pigments, properties of light, and so on—but these things do not make his painting great. His peculiar gift is to inject into this knowledge a fusing spark that makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts. So also the parent.

*"I come back to my original proposition: the true value, scientific and practical, of child-psychology is not that we may know this or that fact about children, or even know this or that about the constitution of that plenary being, 'the child,' but that we may know how the growth of a human being proceeds, what helps and hinders, what furthers and what arrests it, and how these results are brought about."*—IRVING KING.

# The Gateway to Growing Up

***In making his initial contacts with the world, the baby needs love as well as freedom.***

GLADYS HOAGLAND GROVES

IT may seem as if one did not have to consider the social life of the infant, so zealously is he guarded from overstimulation. But pare it down as one will, his social life is strategic in its position at the gateway to his habit-setting years. And the less there is to the infant's social environment, the more carefully must one watch its effect.

Some of us are so afraid of indulging our craving for contact with our offspring, that we make hermits of them. We may not even talk to them enough to furnish them a chance for a good start in experimenting with language.

"No, we don't talk baby-talk to our child," said the mother of a two-year-old, "and we aren't sentimental about him. He doesn't know what it is to be hugged or kissed. He has his routine and we have ours. Living in this dry part of Florida simplifies matters; more than three hundred days a

year I put him out in the yard at eight o'clock and there he plays in his sand-pile until noon, and then again after dinner and nap until supper time. As I work downtown from eight-thirty to five-thirty, I hire my next-door neighbor to keep an eye on him and feed him and put him to bed. My only difficulty is in getting her to leave him alone to develop his own resources. I have finally had to forbid her going near him more than once in the middle of the morning and once in the middle of the afternoon, just to make sure he is comfortable."

A few minutes later this mother was asking where she could have her son examined to find out whether he was seriously subnormal mentally, as he seemed so backward in speech and even in understanding the conversation of others. Whatever his mental status, it is plain to those with more experience than his mother that he has suffered mainly from too little social contact.

Others of us, equally extreme in attitude, deluge our infants with uncontrolled emotion, accustoming them either to constant demonstration of affection, to being always in our sight and usually in our arms, or to adult ups and downs, jumping from ecstasies of endearment to periods of indifference punctuated with nagging. Either of these selfish policies disturbs the young child's emotional growth by centering his attention too heavily on himself.

## Kitchen Companionship

The hours a small child spends in the care of his nurse-maid or any other household servant are, for instance, sometimes reckoned as a blank in estimating the social influences that play upon him. But in doing so we are quite off the track. Susie in the kitchen may be more wholesome in her effect on our children than we, his parents. For personality is more than intelligence plus opportunities, and Susie may be better adjusted to life than we who hire her. If she "has a way with children" so that they like, without overrunning her, we may cast up her account in terms of child care principles and see how far we should list her as an asset worthy of holding a large place in our child's social life. Does she let the child "help" her in her work? Is her general attitude as well as her talk with the child free from fear-inducing elements?

Of course many a Susie is so dour, always complaining of her aches and hard luck, or so hot tempered or fidgety, that we quickly realize the unwisdom of turning a child over to her, even for a short time. We may not be able to choose our cook for her personable qualities—though that is not impossible if we can take time to teach her the rudiments of cooking—but we will cut down the young child's contact with her if she seems to take pleasure in thwarting him, or to be emotionally at cross-currents with the busy eagerness of these adventurous years.

## To Market—to Market?

If we keep no maid we must choose between other equally pressing alternatives. Shall we take the youngest member of the family with us while we do our daily shopping, or shall we keep him at home and order by phone? We cannot afford to overlook the type of casual social contact to which we expose the child whom we carry about with us on a shopping trip. In a small town we may be sure every neighbor we meet will feel either duty bound to exclaim over the baby's good looks or under equal compulsion to call attention to some prominent feature. Taking the baby into all the stores tires him, and leaving him outside exposes him to the caresses of passers-by.

These are only two of many misadventures, minor perhaps, but in the aggregate impressive, which everyone of us has submitted to more or less helplessly. When the alternative of "never going anywhere" seems even more objectionable what shall we do? When we have several children who are close together in age, or young neighbor children who come often to play with our child and as often welcome him at their homes, we may watch from the sidelines the nursery school movement. But if our child has only older children or only younger children to play with, we have to scrutinize his traits from time to time to discover whether he might greatly benefit by the daily give-and-take of a nursery school group. Or, whatever the superficial good points of his social environment, if our child does not thrive, physically or emotionally, we can be glad if there is a chance to introduce new elements into his life by the simple method of entering him in an experimental pre-kindergarten group.

For many of us, nursery schools are out of the question for a variety of reasons, ranging from expensiveness to lack of trained leaders. But for all of us some sort of cooperative child care accompanied by group study is within the bounds of possibility. Though we only swap children with our best friend for an occasional hour, something is gained in wider horizons for us as well as for our children. By subordinating our immediate house-

keeping or other interests, we can generally discover some way of pooling our needs with those of our neighbors for the good of all concerned. In city, country and village, in many different parts of the country are small groups of mothers who take turns in caring for each other's children for two or three hours a day, the number of children in a group and the amount and kind of supervision given varying according to the needs and interest of the members.

Whatever the particular circumstances of our grown up world, whatever the individual needs of that unique little person who is our child . . . we should pause in our mad rush to accomplish our daily stint long enough to observe and ponder his social state. Just as we take young Johnny to a physician at least twice a year for an examination of his physical attainments, we will do well to set ourselves the task, every month or so, of critically studying his social environment. Whether he is sixteen weeks old or as many months, we may look keenly at certain conditions.

(1) Is Junior over-cared-for? He may be getting his wants satisfied so easily that he has little desire to exert himself. At sixteen weeks he may be slowed up in his development by an adoring grandfather or an impatient maidservant who hands him his toys almost before he reaches for them; and at sixteen months he may be in the process of being made too lazy to talk, by a slightly older sister who does all his talking for him.

(2) Is he irritated by some older person—servant, relative or neighbor—who is antagonistic toward him, with the result that the naturally frequent contacts with this person usually leave him tired or precipitate quarrelsomeness? It may be that somebody in the toddler's small world cannot stand the restrictions put upon him by the child's presence, or is truly jealous of the baby's importance in the family. This may be a childless neighbor who cloaks her own emptiness in complaints of any childish noise or prank; it may be a parent, brother or sister who is unwilling to share with the newcomer the focus point of the family's attention, and takes out his ill will in harshness.

(3) Is the child's life forced under rules and routine that thrive at his expense? It is unfortunate when the regulations under which his life runs exist for their own sake, or the ease of their administrators, with little regard for their long-time effect on him.

(4) Does the child feel sure of his parents' love without being suffocated by its unrestrained expression? Affection he needs, but affection that is shown in reasonable moderation.

(5) Is the home serene? Security for the little child is measured by the degree to which he senses the equable temper of his folks.

# What Has the Nursery School to Offer?

ROSE H. ALTSCHULER

As I consider what I wanted for my own five children at different age levels—at three, at eight, at thirteen and all the others—it seems to me that the ultimate objectives have always remained about the same. It is only the methods of attaining these objectives that have changed. The methods changed as the children, the world around us, and we ourselves evolved. After all, though at different times we may have worded it differently, probably most of us have always primarily wished for our children that they should be integrated, harmonious human beings who would feel themselves joyously identified with people and the world about them. We have hoped that they would finally discover that a creative attitude toward life is the way of life that brings the greatest satisfactions and that they would realize that they must constantly put something of themselves into their daily living if they are to be in any measure vitally happy, and if they are not to become dissatisfied and sated.

Perhaps twenty years ago, we should have said that a happy home and family life, with opportunities to experiment with materials, would meet the needs of most young children—but today, that statement does not cover the situation. Traditional "family life," like buffaloes and Indians, may be found now only on small reservations here and there. The world has become a dizzy place, where a majority of

families know little of real family living, where we live under pressure—time pressure, financial pressure, noise pressure, pressure of cramped living quarters, and even worse, we are told, pressure of cramped emotions. Many of the old values seem to have gone out of fashion along with leisure and meditation and "Home Sweet Home."

What is the place and function of the nursery school in this fast changing pattern of life? Its function is not, as is sometimes assumed by its critics, further to institutionalize life and to relieve parents a bit more of the care of their young children. On the contrary, the nursery school is much concerned with deepening family relationships and family life. The philosophy of the nursery school concerns itself with the full functioning of the individual, not only at school or on the level of nursery education, but throughout life. We believe that the fabric of life is made up of a network of habits, and that the pattern of the fabric in each life is started with the beginning of life itself. Nervous stability is often given or taken away through the habits established in the first two years. As the child develops, the pattern of habits becomes more complicated. Eating, sleeping, one's way of handling materials, one's responsiveness to other human beings, control of temper—these are all largely matters of early training. Children of from two to three years of age come into the nursery school with these patterns already well defined —there are the over-cared-for children whose eating and sleeping habits may be unsatisfactory, or who in some other way may demand too much attention; and again, there are the under-cared-for children who perhaps lack a sense of security and who are emotionally unstable. There are also, of course, a number who are well adjusted both within themselves and in all their outgoing relationships.

## The Twenty-Four Hour View

Nursery school conception of education differs from previously accepted forms of educational philosophy in that it believes that every factor in the life of the child concerns the school. The child's twenty-four-hour program should be thoughtfully planned by parents and school together. In making it, due consideration should be given to sleeping and eating habits at home and at school, to emotional control, to use of play time, to companionship —juvenile and adult—in fact, to every possible factor that may affect the child's way of life. The home and school must cooperate in the carrying out, as well as in the making, of this program.

Perhaps an excerpt from a report sent out last year will exemplify one of the ways in which the nursery school is trying to effect cooperation between families and school and to intensify a sense of responsibility on the part of parents.

## As Others See Us

The nursery school belief is that if parents are relieved of the care of their children for three to six hours daily, they should thus be prepared to give the children better and more intelligent care during the remainder of the day. Reports such as the following are sent out periodically:

My dear Mr. and Mrs. S.,

Now that Margaret has been in school for six months, we should like to give you a report of her development.

Her physical condition is good. She is now three and a half years old, her height is 37¾ inches and her weight 36 pounds. This is about average for her height and age. We are recommending that all of the children in the nursery school be immunized against small pox and diphtheria. If there are any questions about this matter in your mind, we hope you will discuss them with us.

Margaret's eating and sleeping habits are well established. She eats well and there are no foods that she refuses. She sleeps for two hours each afternoon.

Socially she is well adjusted. She plays nicely with other children and is very friendly to children and adults. She tries too much to attract the attention of adults. We discourage this as far as possible, because we believe it is much better for a child to play with children than it is for her to get adults to play with her. We think her desire for adult attention is due partly to the fact that she is getting a great deal of attention from many adults in your home, and perhaps also due to the fact that as you are both working, she is not getting enough attention from you. Margaret is a very loving child and seems to want affection. We recommend that each of you give her your undivided attention for fifteen to twenty minutes a day (at the same time each day if possible). During this time you might read or play with her. She will probably then get a sense of security and satisfaction that she now lacks, because you are away from her so much.

Margaret is an able child, doing well the things that children of her age do. We find her very cooperative in every way.

We hope this report will be of value to you. We want you to feel free to come to the School and discuss with us any questions regarding our school pol-

icy of handling problems, as well as any problems you may have at home with Margaret. In order to run successfully, the School needs your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

————————Teaching Director

————————Staff Director

This situation and report are both typical and one of many that appear in the three different social and educational levels in which we work, that is, among foreign born, among negroes and among more privileged suburban dwellers.

To sum up, I should say that the nursery school has two functions as considered especially from the parent point of view. The one function is the setting up of a home and school program which will give the child daily opportunity to fulfill himself in a sound and rich environment where life may be lived happily and without pressure. And its second function is the study of the child's relationship with his environment. The intensifying and enlarging of the family's understanding of his relationships to each individual in the group is undoubtedly a major consideration in most good nursery schools.

This consideration of the whole child in relationship to his total environment is probably the largest contribution of the nursery school to contemporary educational thinking. In time it is to be hoped that schools for children of two, six, thirteen and twenty, will all consider children not as tanks to be filled with processes and knowledge, but perhaps rather as sensitive instruments that must be attuned to the orchestra of life about them. Actually every contact with a person or an experience contributes to the harmony or dissonance of the child's being. Education is the never ending process by which this being gets and stays in tune, and plays in harmony.

# Going to School

*When the child first enters school, responsibility for his adjustment is shared by both parent and teacher.*

MABEL R. GOODLANDER

OUR definition of education has widened in these latter days to include the sum total of a child's behavior, and since we regard the child as an unique whole we must recognize that the varied influences which touch his life either re-inforce or hinder each other. The integrity of his personality depends on a certain unity of ideals among those who most potently shape his environment—in early years, the family and the teachers.

No school, of course, can wholeheartedly accept the standards of every home represented among its numbers but must have its own objectives, its own special character. And I should place honesty and sincerity of educational purpose as an essential characteristic of any school worthy of its responsibility.

One may assume that parents who, for one reason or another, do not send their children to public schools, select the type of school which best represents their philosophy of life. Having chosen a school, certainly one should support its policies or, if endeavoring to modify them, should do so only through friendly and constructive criticism. Happily I have found that most parents—not all, I regret to say—do just this. Some who fail to cooperate have not kept in close enough contact with the school, or are too indifferent; or perhaps the school itself is at fault in not inviting parent participation.

No teacher can satisfactorily meet a child's individual problem unless she has the parent's confidence, nor do I think the home can function at its best if it disregards the efforts of the school. Home and school see the child in a very different adjustment pattern as he functions in the two dissimilar set ups—the family and the school community. Each needs to share its knowledge with the other in order to envision the whole child. The parent's advantage is that of knowing him in intimate and very personal surroundings; the teacher sees him when he is more "on his own" in a new social world where he is only one of many with equal claims to attention.

And so such things as difficult adjustment to others or inability to direct oneself stand out in

school, while often the disobedience, capriciousness or irritability which trouble the home are non-existent in school because of the discipline afforded by competing personalities of the child's own age, upon whom he cannot impose his desires so easily as upon the home folks. The teacher's impersonal attitude, her response—less emotional than that of the mother—is a factor in the better behavior of some children in school than at home.

A mother once said to me, "I don't think mothers really like children. We only like our own child and if anything goes wrong we blame the other child or the teacher."

While this is an exaggerated statement it contains an element of truth. A mother who can regard her child somewhat objectively in his relations with others, has gone a long way toward helping him learn to meet life happily and successfully. In listening to tales a child brings home or in considering what you see in a chance visit in school it is well to reserve judgment until the whole situation is clear. The wise teacher also will know the whole story before she credits the "my mother says" type of gossip about school situations.

Although there is no time in school life in which the sharing of responsibility by parent and teacher is not an urgent need, perhaps the most important period is the first year. It is then that the school attitude of the child is established for good or for ill. Upon teachers and upon all the members of the home family lies the responsibility for keeping alive the first eager appreciation of school shown by most children. One six-year-old boy expresses his feeling thus:

### School

A school day is a joyful day
When we run about and play,
And when we have to go home again
We wait until the next day.

To a little child the first approach to school is fraught either with much joy or with much trepidation. The first year at school is a great adventure —a voyage of discovery in the land of "beginning-to-be-grown-up." No parent can afford to be left out of the exploring party.

The anxiety of a parent when a little one leaves the shelter of home for the first time is natural and every school should meet the new parent and the child with reassuring friendliness and an appeal to the child's interest which will disarm fear. The transition from the home to the more highly organized needs of the school will be made without difficulty if in earlier years a child has known something of simple responsibilities such as care of personal belongings, waiting upon himself, dressing himself; if he has attained a certain degree of self-control and power of attention, if he has good habits of eating and sleeping. Even a young child can gain power to think and act only through experience in thinking and acting. Certainly by five or six years of age—and I should say even earlier —he should show some capacity for purposeful effort, whether it be in learning to lace his own shoes, in building a block house or in other activities.

As I see it, school and home are parties to a contract to work together for the good of the child. On the material plane no better help can be given by the home than the development of a child's independence in some of the simple matters of which I have spoken, and nothing helps the wheels run so smoothly as promptness in sending a child to school, in calling for him on time and in meeting all routine school requests. To be sure, the school must make reasonable allowance for difficult conditions in the home and it must provide a place to keep the rubbers and sweaters, but if these articles are not marked as requested and are lost, whose responsibility is it? It seems a small matter to consider how children should be dressed, yet how much hard feeling can be engendered when Mary loses the button of her best coat in a romp on the playground. But why the best coat for an active school life?

In the more important aspects of education, much friction and emotional disturbance of the child can be caused by divergent standards of home and school in matters of desirable conduct and educational procedure. Take the matter of learning to read of which Miss Langley writes, a child may be seriously handicapped by tactless teasing or reproaches because he does not read so early as some other child, or so well. If there were space I could cite many cases of failure in school life caused by lack of agreement in the child's two worlds on some of the fundamental values of life. But I could also give instances of successful school life guaranteed by the mutual understanding and the "team work" between parents and teachers.

As to the best machinery for bringing about such desirable relations, I think that every school must work these out for itself. No second hand scheme borrowed from another will fit a live school. The size of the school, among other things, is an important factor in meeting the problem. All schools can, however, have some form of parent-teacher or-

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# When Shall We Learn to Read?

*Explaining why the progressive school delays the study of the "Three R's."*

ELIZABETH EUPHROSYNE LANGLEY

For generations "Reading, Writing and 'Rithmetic" have been the accepted symbols of learning. Early mastery in these skills has long meant an early entrance upon a sound educational program. Hence the delay of these subjects to seven or eight years of age is a radical change, and is therefore rightly made to undergo anxious and searching scrutiny on the part of parents and teachers. They are justified in asking for the reasons that lie back of such a change, and in challenging the new methods to produce results. In this discussion I do not presume to speak for all progressive schools, but only for such as I know first hand.

It has required persistent and independent study of the child himself in order to break away from the old ideas, and to evolve and formulate the new technique. In this pursuit it has become increasingly clear that the "Three R's," tools necessary to the adult, have no natural place in the early years of a child's life.

The child has his own way of approaching learning. To define content material as the "Three R's," or as dominated in importance by the "Three R's," seems to me an unfortunate limitation and misnomer. Content material should mean all that the child's mind takes in by every kind of normal approach. Put a child in a rich and suggestive environment. Give him a variety of constructive materials. Put at his disposal paints, crayons, clay, blocks, weaving frames. Let him observe seasonal changes in plants and animals, and the corresponding changes in his own home. Let him plant his own garden. Let him hear good music and fine poems. Let him dramatize interesting stories. Let him have the responsibilities of small housekeeping duties. Let him play games that involve measures and weight. And let him have the excitement and interest of working with children of his own age.

I said to one child of five, "Would you like to learn to read?"

The acute answer was, "I should like to read but I should not like to learn to read." This child is not only not ready for books but they would really hinder his development. On the way from the kitchen door of his aunt's house to the living room he noted the ventilating system of the cooler, the panelled recess for the ironing board, the small closet for brooms, the separate drawers for flat silver, kitchen utensils and string, and the entire contents of the ice box. The objects in the living room from the wind harp and the radio to the fire tongs made their rapid contribution to his repertoire of facts. And they were facts intelligently grasped and vividly remembered.

This child is equally open to facts of a different order. When an amulet was explained to him as something to ward off evil, he said, "That is not real. That is what they call magic."

Now, this five-year-old and others like him excellently illustrate the colossal amount of knowledge a child accumulates and assimilates before he comes to the point of using reading, writing and arithmetic advantageously. He is following the road suited to his age and interests. His approach to learning is a natural, easy, joyous progress. He has a right to the maximum satisfactions this portion of his life can offer. To be happy in his daily occupations and to be learning unconsciously is an ideal condition. The value of happiness in a child's early life cannot be overstated. Its color and brightness are permeating influences through his later life. Tasks foisted upon him too early are really a stultifying influence. Reading, writing and number work are not normally attractive to him. He toils along this difficult road only if prodded and stimulated thereto by parents and teachers. If a child of five or six, self-prompted, felt an urge toward any one or all of the "Three R's" it would be as unwise to hold him back and repress him as it would be to push him unwillingly into these activities. But experience shows that it is a rare occurrence for a child of five or six to choose to read or write or cipher, when other occupations are

open to him. Too many times he is like Kipling's little "Ba Ba Black Sheep" who said, "Now I can read I'll never read another word."

In point of fact learning should be, from the nursery blocks to the doctor's hood, a matter of joyous mental activity. Not that it is a soft and easy path. But every research student discovers that the slowest, most tedious and troublesome process becomes a matter of joyous energizing when it is voluntarily gone through with because there is a goal in sight. This experience has its counterpart in the child's life. Whatever leads to some chosen goal he does with delight even if it is difficult. But during the early years of his active learning he has no use for reading, writing and ciphering. He is essentially objective. He is occupied with things and not with the symbols for things. A dog or a cat may count immensely in his real life, but d-o-g and c-a-t are meaningless. He is not ready to make the connection between the abstract and the concrete. To force symbols on the mind before it is ready for them is to befog the mind and dull its activities. The child's mind has an infinite capacity for resisting instruction when a frontal attack is made with material not suited to him. But he may be led pleasurably into the realms of genuine learning.

## Tricks versus Training

THAT a child may be taught to read as early as three is unquestioned. And a book is certainly the harassed mother's easiest way of filling up a child's time, of keeping him still and out of the way. The earlier he learns to read the sooner she is free from the eternal "What shall I do next?" But from the point of view of the child's development the early book is a mistake. If the mother had the time, patience and skill to join with him in imaginative and constructive activities it would contribute infinitely more to his enrichment. The bookworm child is being deprived of his heritage. He may be the pride of the home but he becomes the problem of the school. He loses in independence and originality.

It is, then, our belief that the child of seven or eight who has not had formal reading, writing and number work and who has had imaginative and constructive play activities has been educated in a sounder, more forward-looking manner than is the child of eight with two years formal training.

What are the results? What happens at eight? A single instance may be cited in answer. At Edgewood we had a class of twenty children of eight years of age, none of whom had had the "Three R's." The expert teacher who took this group said that it was her first experience with children educated according to this method. She was so amazed at the quickness and ease with which the children grasped the new technique of formal learning that she reported her findings to a university, and we were asked to allow a specialist from the university to give the members of this group a series of general mental tests. The specialist stated as a result of the tests that all the group were above the average rating and that many of them held distinguished ratings.

Then a second test was called for. We were asked to work parallel with an eight-year-old group that had had reading, writing and number work for two years. Exactly the same material was given to the two groups for a six-week test. Results were carefully correlated. This test was made in December two months after our children made their first acquaintance with the redoubtable "Three R's." At the end of the first week the groups were equal. At the end of the second week Edgewood showed a gain. By the end of the fourth week Edgewood had completed the work which occupied the other group the full six weeks. The results of this interesting test are supported by the continued experience of our school. The advantage of delaying formal school work until children have a rich background of experience and a degree of maturity is evidenced by the strength of their initial attack on formal learning.

## From Things to Symbols

THE emphasis here has been put on reading because delay in writing and arithmetic is less often questioned. But in these subjects there is the same natural and easy transition at seven or eight from the visual and the concrete to their expression in formal symbols. Manuscript writing is but a drawing of letters as he has heretofore made drawings of things. He has made a picture of a cat, now he makes a picture of the word "cat." He has used some sort of drawing material since he was three and his manipulative skill passes easily into the new form. Writing and reading develop together.

Delayed number work is a misnomer. When the formal symbols are introduced at seven or eight there is already a developed number sense. Already the children are conscious of comparative weights, measures, sizes and shapes. There is, in fact, no realm of knowledge in which the transfer from the concrete fact to the symbol of the fact is more easily and rapidly made than in number work. In less than a month the new technique is in easy use. But this easy and interesting transfer from the fact to the symbol must be presented at the psychological mo-

ment. The children have a rich knowledge of concrete addition, subtraction and even of fractions, and it becomes a game to put the accumulated knowledge into the new frames.

In making this transition to formal learning it is extremely important that the children should have the sympathetic guidance of a teacher specially trained. It is a pivotal, crucial experience for the children, and the way the new symbols are presented will determine their later happiness in school work in these particular subjects.

This theory of the delayed "Three R's" is no new one. The plan we are trying to carry out at Edgewood is merely a continuation of the clearly enunciated theory and the consistent practice of Colonel Parker and John Dewey in their schools a quarter of a century ago. It was my good fortune to have my early teaching experience under these educators, and to observe the success of their ideas in hundreds of cases. It is therefore with a sense of security that Edgewood follows out a theory thus originated and demonstrated.

# Education and Training for Life

*Is everything made too easy for privileged youth? An educator who believes it is offers some alternatives.*

By WILLIAM BURNLEE CURRY

NOWADAYS we are told that "education is not preparation for life, but life itself." Unfortunately, Nature has left me very deficient in certain respects and one of these is that I lack the power to appreciate sentimental slogans. Most of them seem to me devoid of meaning, and the one in question is no exception. To me, education means the treatment which is meted out to children by parents and teachers, with a view to promoting their successful development. I cannot see what else education could mean, nor can I imagine parents and teachers, if they are also rational beings, feeling indifferent to the ultimate results of what they do to the children in their charge. For this reason I take it as axiomatic that education means preparation for life. It may, of course, well be that what, in the hideous jargon of our times, are now called "life situations" afford a better training for life than the old-fashioned "recitation," but this is a matter of educational technique and not of definition. To confuse the two is merely to darken counsel.

It is not possible, within the limits of one article, to deal with all aspects of this subject, and I shall, therefore, select a few of the points which seem to me specially important at the moment. Each of us is likely to become a member of a community, indeed of several communities, and it is in youth and chiefly at school that we learn how to behave as a member of a community. This is a matter on which there is a good deal of confusion at present. In the old-fashioned school, everything is done to promote herd feeling—school assemblies, singing, athletics and military training being the chief methods adopted to secure this end. Cooperation between children in academic matters is usually impossible, since it would be considered cheating. Children brought up in this way are convinced that their school and their country have all kinds of imaginary merits and are unquestionably superior to other schools and other countries. They do not, however, know how a group can carry through any activity which is not inspired by hostility to some other group.

Modern schools and modern parents have usually reacted very strongly from this point of view and, while there is much group activity in a modern school, there is also great stressing of the individual as an end in himself. It is right that the teacher should think of the child, not only as a member of a group, but as an end in himself; but I doubt very much whether the child should know this. It is a universal complaint and one, I think, which is well justified, that children brought up by progressive methods are extremely selfish and have little or no respect for the rights of others. Militaristic methods of promoting group feeling have not been adopted and, since no others are used instead of them, the child very often has no sense of any obligations except to himself. This is a problem which has not yet

been solved, and I do not pretend to have the complete answer to it. I am disposed to think, however, that the answer to it may be found by reflecting upon Sanderson's famous saying that "school should be a model of the world as we would love to have it." It seems to me that, in an ideal world, the individual would have two different relationships to the community. On the one hand, economic parasitism would not be tolerated and everyone would be rightly expected to take his share in the necessary work of the world. In this matter, therefore, freedom is strictly limited and freedom to idle does not exist. Work, however, would not occupy twenty-four hours in the day, and the rights of the community are at an end when one's work is over. At this stage, the right of the individual to spend his leisure as he pleases seems to me unquestionable, provided he is not interfering with the indubitable rights of others.

How does this apply to education? I think that modern children, especially in the middle and upper classes, find life altogether too easy. They have no sense of economic reality and many services which they could perfectly well perform for themselves or for the family, or for the school, as the case may be, are performed by paid servants. Not long ago, I heard a mother boast that her daughter had never made her own bed. There are schools like the Kent School in America, or Dartington Hall School, or Bedales School, in England, where the children, as a matter of course, do a considerable share of the necessary menial work. This, however, is very uncommon among schools for the well-to-do, and still less common among the families of the well-to-do. My suggestion is that education would provide a far better training for life if every child were expected and, if necessary, compelled by penalties of an economic nature, not only to do the academic work which is expected of him, but also to do work of economic value in connection with his school and home. When this is begun early, it is taken as a matter of course.

## Nothing Too Much

I HAVE said that I think our general attitude mistaken in regard to work—I think it is also mistaken in regard to leisure. It is distressingly common both in schools and in homes for the leisure hours of children to be planned for them by adults. It is not at all uncommon nowadays for mothers to plan the whole of their children's holidays and to arrange all their entertainments. Not only, therefore, is the child not expected to have a sense of responsibility for the community, he is not even expected to have a sense of responsibility for himself. Having deprived children of the opportunity and obligation of responsibility it is hardly sensible for parents to turn round, as they do when their children are ready to leave school, and complain that the children have developed no sense of responsibility.

My suggestions in these matters are, therefore, twofold. On the one hand, I think it essential that every child should perform work of economic value; when a child is quite small, it can begin to take care of its own room, to make its own bed, take care of its clothes, and generally do many services which are all too often performed by mothers and servants. Later on, both at home and at school, a child can begin, in cooperation with others, to perform services which are useful to the group. These might include helping in the preparation of meals, the washing of dishes and care of buildings and gardens.

## Children's Hour—New Style

ON the other hand, the children's leisure hours ought to be as free as possible from the interference of adults and also from the sense of obligation. Some room for spontaneity is necessary, I believe, as a condition of mental and emotional health. There should be some chance even to loaf, some time when one is accountable to no one for one's actions. I think that children who do not know what to do with their leisure ought to be allowed to be bored until they find out, provided only that adults have ensured that the environment is rich in opportunity. Parents are all too apt to be worried when their children do not know what to do and to make the decisions for them. In this way, it is impossible for children to form habits of independence and to experience the valuable discipline of taking the consequences of their own decisions. In the formation of clubs, in the cultivation of hobbies, parents and adults should be always in the background ready to help if they are necessary, but still more ready to withdraw and to leave the children to make their own decisions and to profit by their own mistakes. At the same time, it should be considered a matter of elementary morality that one earns one's right to leisure and freedom by the prompt and faithful performance of one's duties.

Training for life must concern itself principally with character and habits. In other matters, there is too much difference between individuals, and in the matter of curriculum each child presents a different problem. For this reason I have confined myself to two problems which seem to me of immense importance and which are common to all.

# Cross-Sections of Childhood

LOOKING at any given cross-section of childhood is very much like looking at a single clip of arrested motion out of a moving picture. It is not complete in itself and has full meaning only as a part of what goes before and after that particular moment. Nevertheless, it has a distinct use in that, being a "still," it makes reflective observation much more possible than when in its active phase of continuous growth and change.

Studies of growth have varied with almost every student from Shakespeare on in the divisions made in the "ages of man." Numerous classifications will be found in the different books suggested at the end of this article. These three cross-sections have been selected simply to give comparative pictures of early, middle and later child development.

So also the descriptive subdivisions have varied from one investigator to another. For the sake of simplicity in such a non-technical description as this, three rather loose and mutually overlapping descriptive divisions have been used—physical development, mental development and social-emotional development.

These, then, are pictures, cross-cut from scientific research, as to what the general run of children are like at about three, eight and thirteen. They are *not* to be taken as "average" or "median" or even "normal"; for such terms are much too specific and proportionately misleading.

It is more helpful for parents to say "This is about what usually happens. I can check my child's development against these usual standards of growth in order to see how far he is progressing along the usual lines."

## THIRD YEAR

By his third year the child has definitely ceased being a baby and is on the threshold of new and rapidly developing capacities and interests. This is about the time when most parents suddenly realize that the change is definite. Boys of three are likely to vary between thirty-three inches in height with a weight of twenty-six pounds, and forty inches in height with a weight of thirty-six pounds. Girls vary between thirty-two inches in height with twenty-five pounds weight and forty inches in height with thirty-five pounds weight. The three-year-old already has twenty first teeth including the second molar. In addition to this growth, there is a rapid development in motor ability. This is shown both in the greater number of things that are done and the increased skill and speed with which they are carried out. In relation to walking and talking this is obvious, and is also evident in such activities as going up stairs. The three-year-old can usually accomplish this without holding on to the rail, and if he is tall enough, he can frequently use alternate steps just as grown-ups do. Other ways in which his increased motor capacity and skill show include being able to stand or hop on one foot, to jump from a low step, to pile at least seven or eight blocks, to draw horizontal and vertical lines imitatively, to copy a circle, to crease a piece of paper neatly. Many children also begin to use the right hand with more accuracy than the left and prefer it for finer adjustments.

Physical Development

Between two and three years old the vocabulary increases as a rule by about six hundred words, bringing the total which the child understands to somewhere between eight hundred and nine hundred. He uses pronouns and plurals and the past tense. He takes pleasure in telling simple stories, either repeating stories read to him, narrating things that have really happened or making them up. He tends to use less "baby talk" though he will be at least four years old before he loses most of his early individuality of expression. He knows his first name and family name and his sex, and may have observed differences in the sexes. He can point to objects named to him in a picture and can enumerate what he sees in a picture. He distinguishes relationships such as *in, under, behind.* He has learned the difference between *longer* and *shorter.* He can repeat three digits instead of two. He can carry out directions involving two processes. He can build a bridge imitatively with blocks, put the two parts of a severed picture together correctly, and match colors. He probably is beginning to learn the names of one or more colors and is very much interested in color and in color matching. His drawing ability is just beginning to pass beyond random scribbling. The

Intellectual Development

scribblings do not usually show a great increase in form but he gives them names suggested by chance resemblances.

Many of the phases of development here are also affected by growth along both physical and intellectual lines. This is true for instance of his understanding and use of names including his family name and the names of others, of his ability to carry breakable objects, to help put things away, to open doors, and his growing interest in putting on his own clothes. His play is less individualistic, and more dramatic and social. He likes more and more to play with children his own age, and utilizes playthings in more complex ways. There are already some differences between the play of boys and girls, but these are conspicuously less important than they will be later. He is tremendously interested in his surroundings and has not yet developed many of the ordinary inhibitions of everyday life. This adds to his characteristic tendency to get into everything, and accounts in part for the fact that he is frequently hard to manage, noisy and negativistic. Fears are likely to be rather common and emotional disturbances frequently center about eating and sleeping. In spite of the frequent appearance of what seem to be behavior difficulties, this should be a time of especially satisfying development, both to the child himself and to his parents. Nowhere do the practical suggestions of workers with children outside the home—in clinic, laboratory and nursery school—contribute more directly and visibly to his success and happiness within the home.

Social-Emotional Development

## EIGHTH YEAR

This middle period has sometimes been called the maturity of childhood. With most of the early physical difficulties passed, health and activity are at their best. Vitality, resistance to fatigue are conspicuous. In height boys vary from forty-two inches with a weight of thirty-nine pounds, to fifty-six inches with a weight of seventy-five pounds. Girls vary from forty-three inches in height with forty-one pounds in weight to fifty-five inches in height with seventy pounds weight. (It will be seen that by the time this period is reached, individual variations in height and weight have become more marked and these standards become relatively less important in relation to general health.) Although the characteristic changes of puberty are not yet manifest, physical development in general is thus well along; there are, for instance, twenty-four permanent teeth, all except the second and third molar, and the brain has acquired nearly its adult size in weight. On the motor side the large muscles have reached nearly the height of coordination and finer muscular coordinations are beginning to develop very rapidly. This is both the cause and the result of the typical urge for tremendous activity and the varied interest in such things as running and chasing games, swimming, skating and acrobatic stunts.

Physical Development

By eight such processes as sensory discrimination, immediate memory and memory span have probably reached their maximum development and will change little with increasing age from now on. The eight-year-old in the third grade or thereabouts is expanding his knowledge and his ability to use language very rapidly. He uses every part of speech and form of sentence, and on the whole his speech has taken on a mature character. Frequently this is very marked. He is interested in reading for fun and may also take great pleasure in writing letters or stories or poems for himself. He likes jokes, rhymes, riddles and conundrums. He is very quick to see similarities and differences and to generalize from them. He notices inconsistencies in things and people, and has a frank and unbiased critical attitude. His skill in using tools of all sorts is increasing rapidly but does not keep pace with his visualizations and plans. He is likely to start more than he can finish and may need the guidance of an adult.

Intellectual Development

The eight-year-old is able to do a great many simple tasks, and can frequently carry these out very largely on his own responsibility. But the conspicuous social development for this period comes through play and through contact with his contemporaries. His social life becomes more varied and also more selective. Clubs for both boys and girls become increasingly important. Together with this competitive and cooperative games and social indoor games like dominoes, parchesi, and so on are more and more interesting. There is more tendency for boys and girls to play with children of the same sex, though this is not exclusive. Hobbies are developing, and collections of all sorts—scrap books, stamps, almost anything—are typical interests with both intellectual and social aspects. Most authorities agree that on the whole this is an unemotional period. Freed on the one hand from the clinging emotions of early childhood, and on the other hand not yet troubled by the conflicts of adolescence it is likely to seem a little hard and unresponsive to parents who have not prepared themselves to see this phase through with understanding and sympathy.

Social-Emotional Development

(*Continued on page* 151)

# The Parents' Year

*Parent Education in the White House Conference.*

With more than a year of intensive work, and with the impressive national meeting in Washington in November now behind them, those who took part in the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection are ready to begin evaluating its significance.

We have been so much impressed by the sheer size of this undertaking in which over two thousand professional people have cooperated that we have perhaps lost sight of the antecedents of this Conference. Actually it was not a wholly new project, but had developed as the third great national conference on child welfare called by a President of the United States. Coming at ten year intervals, the first of these under President Roosevelt considered particularly problems growing out of his interest in child labor; the second, called by President Wilson, emphasized problems of less under-privileged children, and brought child health to the fore; the present conference may be said to have placed its emphasis very largely on the home and the parents rather than upon the child taken by himself. Ten years ago we spoke of "The Children's Year." Today we might almost say has come "The Parents' Year."

## Shifting Emphasis

The importance of both parents and parent education has been brought out in the present Conference in ways which have probably been somewhat surprising even to workers in parent education. This emphasis was explicit in the formation and development of the Committee on Family and Parent Education of which Dr. Louise Stanley was the Chairman. But those who listened to the meetings in Washington, no matter how deeply they themselves were already committed to the cause of parent education, were repeatedly struck by the way in which *parents* kept coming up in the proceedings of other committees. Practically every speaker, whether his special interest was in public health, in the handicapped child, in child labor or in social work, applied to his own field President Hoover's opening statement:

"In addressing you whom I see before me here in this auditorium, I am mindful also of the unseen millions listening in their homes, who likewise are truly members of this Conference, for these problems are theirs—it is their children whose welfare is involved, its helpful services are for them, and their cooperation is essential in carrying out a united and nation-wide effort in behalf of the children."

Specifically a survey of parent education now being carried on in every part of the country was made by a Sub-Committee on Types of Parent Education, working as part of Dr. Stanley's committee and with the cooperation of the National Council of Parent Education. Mrs. Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, Director of the Child Study Association, was Chairman, and Miss Flora M. Thurston, Executive Secretary of the National Council of Parent Education, was Secretary. The group represented all phases of parent education work in every part of the country. The object of this report is to inform the public at large of the purposes, present status, general trends and probable future of parent education. In addition to this impressive picture, the Committee on the Family and Parent Education has brought together discussions on its subject by leaders who represent the progressive trends in the movement as a whole. These will be published as part of the Conference Proceedings which are being issued through the cooperation of the Century Company in an impressive series.

Parent education, the Committee feels, need no longer be defended since it "has been accepted as implying the concern which adults normally feel over the welfare of their children and a renewed faith in the value of intelligence for practical purposes." The Committee points out that "parent education is as directly related to child welfare as is, for instance, the education of farmers to the welfare of the nation's crops and cattle."

## Toward the Future

As a summation of their work and purposes, Mrs. Gruenberg formulated the following recommendations presented by the Committee:

*As to Agencies and Institutions.*—In view of the fact that the family has always had to make adjust-

(*Continued on page* 149)

# Parents' Questions and Discussions

***The child's progress through life presents itself to the parent not in perspective, but in a series of day-to-day needs and developments. Parents' questions in study groups reflect the difficulties they meet in adapting yesterday's ideas and procedures to today's new demands.***

***A three-year-old screamed and sobbed when her mother attempted to leave her at a nursery school. The mother wonders, therefore, whether the child is too young for such a separation and ought to wait another year or two.***

This is not a question of age development, but rather of an emotional set-up which will not be likely to adjust itself simply by waiting "until the child is older." Whether the difficulty arises because of the child's too continued contact and overdependence upon the mother, and a consequent fear of being deprived of her presence, or because of a fear of the unknown situation and new companions, it must be understood and be met on a basis of readjustment at this point. It seems probable that a good nursery school will eventually be more helpful than any other agency in this situation, even though there may be a few unhappy mornings. Through the nursery school approach the mother may be helped to a more objective and unemotional relationship which will go far toward freeing the child of difficulties. And, on the other side, the child may find in the nursery school set-up—in the engrossing things to do, the other children and the teacher contact—exactly what she needs in either security or independence or both.

***A boy of four always quarrels with his playmates and prefers to play alone. His mother would like help in determining why, and whether more strenuous efforts should be made to help him play with others.***

Such a question cannot well be considered without knowing very much more about what it implies. Was his mother or nurse so watchful that, for health reasons perhaps, he was kept away from other children when he was younger? When did he begin to have contacts with others? Was he quarrelsome from the very first? By four a child has usually learned that the joys of shared activities are greater than their painful aspects. Something in his development has made it necessary for this child to react negatively. Pressure and "talking to" will do him no good. What he needs now is to be helped slowly and patiently through a process of re-education. How wide a choice of friends does he really have? Are "all his playmates" a carefully singled out handful whom the mother has chosen as suitable? Perhaps a good play group or nursery school might help. It is also possible that there is a real developmental difference which can only be helped by trying to find companions on his own mental level.

***An otherwise well adjusted six-year-old girl is an acknowledged leader among her playmates. Whatever the play may be, she "runs the show" all the time. While she seems to have no difficulty in maintaining popularity among her group, her parents are concerned about her growing aggressiveness which is constantly fed by her demonstrated ability to have her way against all odds. How may they modify the situation?***

Whatever else may be involved, it seems likely that this little girl has never had any real experience in cooperation and in appreciating what others have to contribute. Even at that age she can be helped to realize that her power as a leader also carries obligations. But while neither deprecating nor overemphasizing this special gift for leadership, we may help her to a better evaluation of herself by placing her in situations which will challenge her in terms of other abilities and other relationships. She might profit by a contact with fresh fields of endeavor or with other children whose standards of achievement are higher than or different from her own.

***At six, a little girl is still very slow and clumsy in dressing herself. Now that she goes to school there is a struggle each morning to get ready on time. Should she be dressed by her parent or nurse?***

This kind of "soldiering" is not uncommon at various stages of childhood, and may have a variety of causes. It is sometimes in the nature of a protest, whether against a home or a school situation. For example, it may be a device for getting adult

attention and service, in competition, perhaps, with another child in the home. Or, again, it may be a species of "stalling"—an almost unconscious desire to stay home longer—to postpone the going to school, because of some factor, some demand, in the school situation to which she cannot measure up. In either case the adjustment must be made on a basis of the total situation rather than the immediate one of speeding the dressing process. On the other hand, children vary greatly in their ability to master the kind of skills involved in the dressing process. It may be that the difficulty is no more than this, and that the child needs help, not simply in dressing but also in getting through her play and work activities. There might be some way, too, of readjusting the type of clothing to require the fewest and simplest possible motions. In any case, we have to keep in mind differences between the child's tempo and our own. The pressure of the adult's time schedule is often oppressive to the child who is not geared to the speed that seems to us necessary. Quite possibly the simple expedient of allowing more time—of getting up a few minutes earlier—will relieve the strain of the morning hurry.

***Apparently uninterested in children her own age, a nine-year-old girl has formed a strong attachment to a five-year-old neighbor. Both mothers are concerned as to why the older child must seek this contact, and what its effect may be on the younger.***

We have first to consider why this nine-year-old is thrown back for companionship upon a child so much younger. Perhaps there is some physical or other disability which makes it difficult for her to be welcomed among children her own age. Since her contemporaries do not accept her, and she no longer tries to meet them, she seems to be withdrawing from a difficulty she cannot meet alone. Certainly she has something to contribute to others. Her parents need to discover what these possibilities are and what kind of companionship will be likely to help her bring them out. It is here that the parent can step in to help her find companions whom she can enjoy more nearly at her own level.

When the older child is led toward a more satisfying adjustment, it is not likely that the younger one will continue to have any difficulties. In playing with a child so much older she is likely to be either dominated or held up to a standard which is beyond her years. It is more than likely that she will find more real satisfaction in playing with children her own age once she is free to do so. This is not to say that a real affection between these two need be severed, but rather that both must be helped to find satisfactions which do not depend upon such unequal give-and-take.

***Attending a progressive school where the "Three R's" are deferred, a seven-year-old girl is constantly distressed by the inevitable comparisons with cousins of her own age who read fluently. She begs her mother to teach her to read.***

If the progressive school parent thoroughly understands the school's point of view in this, and has confidence in it, she will be able to fortify her child with a similar confidence. Assuming that this child is enjoying her own school activities, and is finding them satisfying, she will be able to understand that the skills which she is acquiring through these are valid ones, and that the skill of reading has been deferred to make way for these activities. She will probably need the parent's help in evaluating reading as simply one of several desirable skills. Her school's approach to the subject can be interpreted for her in terms of being different in its emphasis from the traditional approach.

***Where children are grouped in school according to their I.Q's, what is the effect on a child who knows he is being placed in a class of "slow" children?***

Much depends upon how both parents and teacher interpret the implication "slow." A sympathetic teacher will make every effort to help the parent understand this classification as implying a difference in emphasis rather than in degree. The parent may need help in accepting the I.Q. for exactly what it is—an index of native endowment but not a delimitation of capacity for accomplishment. Furthermore, the parent needs to realize that any classification based upon the I.Q. is a very general one, and that within it there is wide individual variation. Only when the parent can honestly accept the child on a basis of his actual capacities and limitations can he help the child to accept himself and evaluate himself in relation to others.

Whatever the child's particular abilities are—whether in athletics, art or manual skill—these may be stressed as no less important and valuable than scholastic attainments. Both in school and at home these abilities should be developed to their fullest. The whole matter can be so intelligently and sympathetically dealt with that the child will have no feeling of being "different" or inferior, but will accept the class division simply as one of school convenience. By the time a child is old enough to be interested in his own abilities, he can appreciate his skills fairly objectively and will find increasing satisfaction in whatever contributes to what he wants to do.

# Book Reviews

## *Child Study for Every Need*

*The Management of Young Children. By William E. Blatz and Helen Bott. William Morrow & Co., New York. 354 pages. 1930.*

*The Management of Young Children* thoroughly justified the expectation with which those who have been acquainted with the authors' previous book have received it. Many leaders of parent education groups will find themselves quoting liberally from this book, often without deliberate intention and even perhaps without actually realizing that they have done so. The exposition is so clear, so well rounded and so pertinent that it gives the effect of carrying one's own thought along rather than presenting material for discussion or controversy.

Although in arrangement this volume is very similar to *Parents and the Pre-School Child,* the range of content and the subtle flavor of many of the discussions make it a distinctive addition and amplification of current material. There is a rare combination of philosophy and practice—of philosophy with its eyes on the realities of everyday and of everyday practice not too preoccupied to keep a sharp consciousness of guiding principles.

The major problems which beset parents in their earnest effort to be of the greatest use in guiding their children's development are considered in the light of their immediate provocation and also their more deep seated motivations. No topic or problem is dealt with as a thing apart but always as a component of a whole pattern made up of the objective facts, the personality of the child, and the attitude of everyone concerned toward the child and toward the situation.

The authors, with good judgment and understanding, have avoided two pitfalls which have trapped so many writers of child study books. They have not assumed in advance that the parent is necessarily wrong and that "there are no problem children, but only problem parents." The parent in this volume is sympathetically accepted as being by no means necessarily perfect; but at least one does not get the impression that what be needs is to be constantly put in his place and told what to do by the expert. The second pitfall which this book escapes is that of being too didactic. It recognizes that there is no single "best" way of living. The authors conceive their purpose not as an obligation to give parents a book of rules, but rather as an opportunity to interpret a portion of life. So thinking, they present the evidence which they have assembled and then very properly leave many discussions for the parent himself to clarify in the light of what they have set forth.

Because of its double point of view, it is natural that in form and arrangement this volume should depart a little from the traditional child study text. Most books in this field have either treated the outstanding characteristics at each chronological age, as is done by Ernest and Gladys Groves in *Wholesome Childhood,* or have presented the material according to topics such as "Discipline" and "Habit." Though this book somewhat approximates the second type, each subject is viewed rather more comprehensively. A mental hygiene outlook on life permeates both the material and its arrangement. There are thus only four main divisions—The Nature of Control, The Physical Environment, The Social Environment and Types of Motivation.

The book is intended as a text for study group work and for this purpose the exposition of each chapter is amplified with a topical outline of its salient points; illustrative quotations which have been culled from the records of study group meetings and occasional case studies are briefly summarized. The experienced leader will find this additional material extremely suggestive. But some of it may be a little confusing to the parent unaccustomed to the study group approach, who reads it individually. The contradictory implications of many of the quotations make them valuable for group discussion but may

*Dr. Gesell's editorial expresses a point of view developed much more fully in his book, Guidance of Mental Growth in Infants and Children, published by The Macmillan Company in December* 1930, *and to be reviewed in a coming issue of* CHILD STUDY.

detract somewhat from the value of the book as a source of information for the "lay parent."

No evaluation of the book would be adequate without paying tribute to a style which makes it simple and readable, yet subtle and varied.

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*The Child from One to Six. By Ada Hart Arlitt. McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York. 188 pages. 1930.*

Despite the constantly growing number of books on every phase of child study there is still the greatest need for material which is simple enough and graphic enough to enlist and hold the interest of the untrained parent. Since child psychology has evolved out of the psychological laboratory and the university, it naturally has been extremely difficult to express material thus gathered in words of one syllable and still retain the thought. The method by which writers have frequently sought to accomplish this has been to enliven the theoretical parts of the text by examples and instances drawn from the situations which occur in the daily life of children.

*The Child from One to Six,* by Ada Hart Arlitt, attacks this difficult problem in just the other way. The body of her material consists of examples drawn from the daily life of children in their homes. One gets the comfortable, homey feeling of sympathetic observation, of interested mothers mulling over their common problems, rather than the atmosphere of an expert or teacher who is telling parents what *not* to do.

The chapter headings indicate the wide and yet ever familiar range of these discussions. Obedience, temper tantrums, fears, imagination, all have their place. Toys and games and the use of money are also discussed. Habit, with three chapters to its account—"Good and Bad Habits," "Habits of Sleep, Rest and Elimination" and "Eating Habits"—are perhaps the major concern to which all the other discussions sooner or later return.

The book is permeated with such a friendly and wholesome attitude toward the child and toward the parent, that it will be read with interest by many parents who will recognize in its wealth of illustrative material many situations which are duplicated in their daily association with children in the home. From Dr. Arlitt's treatment of these everyday occurrences they will draw many helpful suggestions which can be applied in their relationships with their own children.

MARION M. MILLER.

## Going to School

MABEL R. GOODLANDER

(*Continued from page* 134)

ganization to promote solidarity of feeling and to spread the ideals of the school among new members through lectures and study classes. School exhibits, opportunities to visit classes, grade meetings—all of these are possible to some degree in any school, and should be more generally attended by parents than is sometimes the case.

### Cooperation Works Both Ways

RECORDS made by the school and shared with the parent are valuable if wisely interpreted; sometimes too a record of the child made by the home for the benefit of the school is helpful. This is especially true as a temporary measure in some difficulty of behavior.

Some of the smaller schools have periodic luncheons or teas where parents and teachers mingle informally and there is no doubt that the more nearly the contacts between teachers and parents resemble those of people in their usual friendly relations the more genuinely helpful they will prove. The time and thoughtful planning necessary for such meetings will be well spent.

But in meeting the needs of individuals there is to my mind no substitute for the parent's visit to the school and the subsequent personal conference between her and the teacher. Often it is enough that the two talk things over quietly and frankly, the parent voicing her criticism, the teacher explaining her point of view. Each one in thinking the matter over, if she is a fair minded person, will find something in her own practice which might be improved, each will be stimulated to a more thoughtful endeavor to meet the child's problem.

Many an irate parent who feels that his child has been unjustly dealt with, after a quiet talk with the head of the school or one of the teachers and if possible a view of the child in action, has modified her thought and come to work with the school most wholeheartedly, to the everlasting benefit of the child. For it is your child who pays indirectly for lack of cooperation between his adult worlds.

Mothers and teachers alike can have their best success in these early school years only if they are generous with their time for the personal contacts, which in all life relations offer the essential element of success.

# News and Notes

With this issue CHILD STUDY will welcome among its readers two thousand members of the Parents' Council of Philadelphia. Parents' Council, in cooperation with the Child Study Association, is arranging a special Philadelphia edition of CHILD STUDY. This is to be made up of four additional pages devoted exclusively to Parents' Council interests under the title—*Philadelphia Parents.* The Association cordially accepts this opportunity to cooperate with another parent education group in bringing CHILD STUDY to an ever increasing number of interested parents.

Philadelphia Parents

The annual program of lectures and conferences offered to active members of the Child Study Association will include a talk on "Early Responses in Relation to the Development of Personality" to be given by Dr. Ada Hart Arlitt at Headquarters on the afternoon of January 13. An evening lecture is scheduled for the 27th of January, and on the 10th of the following month an afternoon round table on "Fear in Children" will be conducted with discussions by Dr. Kenworthy, Dr. Emery, Dr. Levy and Mrs. Miller.

Lectures and Conferences

An advanced course of ten lectures on "Mental Hygiene" is to be given by Dr. Marion E. Kenworthy, Director of the Mental Hygiene Department of the New York School of Social Work. The lectures will be held at the Academy of Medicine on Wednesday afternoons at 4, beginning January 7, under the auspices of the New York City Committee on Mental Hygiene.

In order to promote a better understanding of scientific psychology, the Psychological Corporation will sponsor a series of six lectures on "Psychology and Its Useful Applications" to be given on Friday evenings, at 8:30, January 9 to February 13, at the New York Academy of Medicine. The speakers are such recognized authorities as Dr. Arnold Gesell, Dr. Mark A. May, Dr. Walter R. Miles, Dr. Morris S. Viteles, Dr. Floyd H. Allport and Dr. A. I. Gates.

The Chicago Association for Child Study and Parent Education, in addition to their usual lecture series, has invited Dr. Franz Alexander, who is spending his first year in this country at the University of Chicago, to hold an Institute on Psychoanalysis. The Association's Mid-Winter Meeting will be on January 20 with Dr. Hornell Hart, Professor of Social Education at Bryn Mawr, as speaker. His topic is expected to be of special interest to fathers.

A Joint Conference on Parent Education will be held by the Federal Office of Education and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers at Hot Springs, Arkansas, on May 1 and 2. Leaders and experts will come together to discuss the problems of child training, and to consider the resources for parent education in the United States.

New School for Social Research

Announcement has just been made of the fifty-one courses for the twelfth year of the New School for Social Research. Beginning with January 7, Dr. David M. Levy, President of the American Orthopsychiatric Association and Chief of Staff of the Institute for Child Guidance, will deliver eighteen lectures on "Behavior Problems in Children." These will be studied from the various viewpoints of sociology, medicine, psychometry, behavioristic psychology, the individual psychology of Adler, psychoanalysis and psychiatry, the analyses being illustrated by case material.

Two similar courses will be given by Dr. Ira S. Wile on "Family Relations and Parental Education" and by Dr. Horace M. Kallen on "Human Nature and Education." Dr. Kallen's basic theme is the question whether the present scientific conception of human nature is valid.

Ohio Study Group Survey

A survey of the Parent Study Groups in Ohio during the years 1929-30 was made as a beginning step toward finding out what is the complete picture of parent education. Some fifteen hundred report sheets were distributed among groups affiliated with the State Congress, and among independent groups which church, civic, social, and school organizations sponsor. Two differences are, first, the greater percentage of professional leaders.

and second, the greater number of lecture courses shown in the parent-teacher association reports. The increasing participation of the expert in study group activities is developing as colleges cooperate more fully with neighboring communities.

**Social Hygiene Meeting**

The American Social Hygiene Association will hold its Annual Meeting on January 23 and 24, at the Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City. "Bringing the Infected Under Treatment," "Social Hygiene Activities Abroad," "The White House Conference," "The Prevention of Crime and Delinquency," and "Social Hygiene and the Press" will be discussed.

**Child Labor Day**

The observance of Child Labor Day on January 24-26, under the auspices of the National Child Labor Committee, presents a timely opportunity for a reconsideration of child labor conditions as revealed in the report of a special committee on this subject presented to the White House Conference and published in its Proceedings.

**Parent Education in Philadelphia**

Child study groups conducted by Parents' Council of Philadelphia represent the Council's chief educational work. A brief survey of the sixteen groups led by members of the Council staff reveals five sources of organization requests for professionally led child study groups: schools, social agencies, churches, professional groups such as nurses, teachers and teachers-in-training, and professional parent education workers. Eight of the sixteen groups were led within schools, all of which are planning in the next few years to make parent education a definite part of their educational program.

Over five hundred parents, teachers and social workers attended the seven mental hygiene lectures on "Control and Discipline for Personality Growth" in November. The speakers included Hughes Mearns, Dr. Esther Loring Richards and Judge Charles Hoffman. Mrs. Grace Loucks Elliott will speak on "Family Relationships and the Development of Children's Attitudes" at a morning lecture-conference, the first of three winter conferences, Thursday morning, January 15, at eleven o'clock at the Penn Athletic Club. A luncheon and afternoon conference under the auspices of the Women's International League will follow with Dr. Harry Overstreet, William B. Curry and Dr. Mandel Sherman as speakers. Round tables for parents of different age children will complete the program. "Parent Education—Past and Future" will be discussed at the Council's fifth birthday conference on Tuesday, February 10, at the Bellevue Stratford Hotel.

**The Radio Club Plan**

The Oregon State Agricultural College is conducting a radio club in parent education. Six complete programs with suggestions have been prepared for study groups on child development and parent-child relations. As a feature of each program, the groups tune in on KOAC for a lecture by Mrs. Sara W. Prentiss, Professor of Child Care and Parent Education. Such favorable response has been received that the plan will be continued during the second term.

**Radio Talks At 3:15 P. M.**

Questions on child training will be answered by staff members of the Child Study Association over the radio every Friday afternoon at 3:15. Questions may be sent to WEAF, 711 Fifth Avenue, New York City, or the Association's Headquarters, 221 West 57th Street.

**Library Needs**

The library of the Child Study Association wishes to complete its files and will appreciate hearing from anyone who has the following back numbers of CHILD STUDY: November and December 1929, also January, February, March and April 1930.

**Current Literature on Parent Education**

Many organizations are making parent education material their own. Some of the varied connections in which it is being used are suggested by the following. The Massachusetts Society for Mental Hygiene is publishing a bulletin on *Understanding the Child* which will be distributed free to every teacher in the public schools of Massachusetts for the purpose of bringing to them a knowledge of the principles and practices of mental hygiene.

A new revised edition of the booklet *Prenatal Care* has been published by the United States Department of Labor for mothers for whom medical aid is not at hand, and to supplement the doctor's care, the importance of which is stressed throughout.

In *School Life*, the official organ of the Federal Office of Education in Washington, the ambitious attempt is being made to give a month to month

# Family Strengths

Social workers have consistently grappled with the problem of abnormality, but only recently have they turned their attention to the study of normal behavior. In planning an interesting observation study of individual family strengths, The Family Welfare Association of America will be conducting one of the first experiments with normal groups. The project will be carried on during the coming year by a number of family case workers in the course of their regular duties.

Each case worker will concentrate her attention on one family and on one particular strength in that family. The selection of the special strength in each instance will be based upon careful analyses of families recognized as having made a success of family living against apparent handicaps, the final choice being made by Francis H. McLean, Field Director, who serves as the central co-ordinator. The individual merits of each strength were considered separately, and were not based upon any pre-arranged schedule, nor were they logically mutually exclusive.

Among the twelve to fourteen strengths which as many case workers have agreed to study, a few will indicate the value of the investigation. In one family there exists between the brothers and sisters, both older and younger, as well as between the parents and them a remarkable degree of equality of consideration. For instance, the younger children are not bossed or controlled or regarded as children by the older. The family is a little community in which every person emerging from infancy is treated as a responsible person and participates in a real way in the life of all the others. The worker is endeavoring to find out how this remarkable unity has occurred—how consciously or unconsciously certain attitudes have been brought about.

In another family which has had so many jarring factors between members that it is a wonder that it has not broken apart, there is a marked family loyalty which has saved the day more than once. How this loyalty first emerges in each of the children, what feeds it, forms the difficult observational task ahead.

In another family a curious but successful pattern of motherhood is being studied. The mother is only a "mother" at times and at other times is more like an older sister, and not much older at that. We mean that she does more than *assume* the "companion" role. She is companion instead of mother much of the time. Because in some ways her codes are severe their interposition only in the worst crises is doing no harm and this method has several interesting questions—whether motherhood may not injure by being overdone, or how far the "just sister" role assumed by the mother may be carried advantageously.

The idea in these studies is that much may be observed in conversations with the individual families which reveals subconscious attitudes and reactions, and which may be consciously applied in building up strengths in other families.

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account of educational activities of the entire United States Government. One of the especially valuable features will be a monthly review of current government publications. The *Teachers' Guide to Child Development,* published by the same Office, suggests activity programs for all types of schools within the kindergarten-primary range. Its *Bibliography of Research Studies in Education 1928-1929,* comprises 275 pages of references to research in all fields of education. In *Housing and Equipping* the Washington Child Research Center gives concrete examples of costs, equipment and other factors entering into the establishment of a research type nursery school. The educational system of a foreign country is discussed in Gabriel E. Loftfield's bulletin *Secondary Education in Norway.*

In November, the Russell Sage Foundation published the first *Social Work Year Book* ever issued. It is a record of organized efforts in the United States to deal with social problems. The problems themselves are discussed only to the extent that is necessary for an understanding of the forms of social work related to them. For reference purposes many of the articles contain valuable lists of State conferences, schools of social work, foundations operating in the field of social work, crime commissions, as well as national agencies, public and private, in closely related fields.

## The Parents' Year

(*Continued from page* 141)

ments to changing conditions, as for example, during the pioneering period in this country, and the family as it operates today is in some respects a comparatively new phenomenon, we recommend

That educational facilities for parents and for parenthood be developed as a normal part of the broader educational program.

In view of the wide range of skills and competence required for the task of parent education we recommend

That effort be directed toward the strengthening and improving of existing agencies for parent education, rather than toward the setting up of a new specific machinery for this purpose.

In view of the varied and persistent interests and needs of adult human beings, and of the legitimate claims which adults may make for consideration of their private, community and family relations, we recommend

That in the development of parent education, no matter by whom conducted or for what part of the population, recognition be accorded to parents as personalities apart from their functioning as parents, and not merely as instruments for rearing children in accordance with the standards and methods prescribed by experts or authorities.

In view of the fact that the healthy life of society depends upon mutual adjustments of groups and interests, and in view of the primacy of the home, we recommend

That agencies which serve children and the home be kept flexible, so that they do not become too rigidly institutionalized, and so that the necessary adjustments need not all come from the home.

*As to Training and Methods.*—In view of the complexity of our relations, and of the need for guiding the development of the child as a whole, we recommend

That in the training of everyone who is to work with children or with family situations, attention be given not merely to the special knowledge or techniques required, but also to the broader fundamental facts and principles of psychology, child development and family relations.

In view of the constantly changing knowledge and conditions, we recommend

That provision be made for the continuous and realistic education of all who have to do with children, rather than for the acquisition of static knowledge and the completion of training.

In view of the organic interrelation of the various aspects of child life, and of the inadequacy of specialized treatment, we recommend

That in the training and organization of teachers, nurses, social workers, physicians, psychiatrists, and others who have to do with children, there be developed an attitude of cooperation in the coordination of services, rather than the expectation of technical ministrations by isolated specialties.

In recognition of the fundamental relations of the home to child welfare, we recommend

That in all institutions, including schools, that serve the child in any way, workers cooperate directly with the home and consider themselves as adjuncts to the latter in the promotion of child welfare.

The work of the White House Conference has just begun. With so much actually now being done, we can look forward to ten years of progress before another conference is called. Where then the special emphasis will fall we cannot tell, but there is no doubt that the future will reap much that is significant for parent education from seeds sown in "the Parents' Year."

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The White House Conference was preceded by the second Biennial Conference of the National Council of Parent Education. A statement on the significance of this meeting is being prepared for CHILD STUDY by Mr. Spencer Miller, Director of the National Council, and will appear in the coming issue.

Among the specialists who spoke on various phases of parent education were Dr. Ruth Brickner, who discussed "The Individual Instruction of Parents," and Mrs. Sidonie M. Gruenberg, who presided at the session on "Development and Use of Leadership in Parent Education."

# In the Magazines

*Behavior Problems in the Nursery. By Margaret F. Lowenfeld. The New Era, November 1930.*

This article discusses the behavior problems of young children and suggests ways of preventing their appearance.

*A Conversation in Peking. By Edwin Rogers Embree. The Atlantic Monthly, November 1930.*

The author asks why Western civilization embraced Christianity instead of Mohammedanism, and Eastern civilization adopted Mohammedanism instead of Christianity. He wonders whether each group compensated for what it felt to be its lack by professing—with no thought of living up to—the ideals embodied in the chosen religion.

*A Deadlock in Progressive Education. The New Republic, December 17, 1930.*

This editorial is a discussion of the dilemma in which progressive education finds itself. It, at present, faces the problem of having to prepare students to meet college entrance requirements and, at the same time, of remaining experimental and progressive. The editor feels that there are but two ways out. "Either progressive education must be abandoned in the high schools, or it must be carried through the college years as well." The author thinks that it is high time that parents and educators face this situation squarely and come to some definite decision.

*How About a Little Music. By Sigmund Spaeth. North American Review, November 1930.*

This article shows that the desire to produce music of some kind is universal and that, with modern methods and with the variety of instruments now available, almost anyone can play some instrument pleasurably.

*The Importance of Social Relationships in the Development of the Personality and Character of the Adolescent. By Frankwood E. Williams. Mental Hygiene, October 1930.*

Dr. Williams' thesis in this article is that our concern should be not so much with the existence of social evils as with the needs of individuals which make these evils attractive. "If we can successfully immunize the child against these things [social evils], then their existence in the world does not greatly matter."

*Management of Home and Family. By Ruth Lindquist. Hygeia, December 1930.*

This is a popular article based on the result of a questionnaire. The purpose of the study was to obtain information on attitudes and practices in "home management and its relation to child development." Household organization, family income, personal relationships and health are some of the topics discussed.

*The Parents' Most Important Job. By Lionard Blumgart. The Delineator, January 1930.*

The author discusses the fact that a serene, understanding atmosphere in the home is necessary for the child's emotional development. He suggests ways in which this serenity can be attained and lists some "don'ts" for parents.

*The Play Instinct and the Arts. By Jane Addams. Religious Education, November 1930.*

The author sketches the various artistic activities sponsored by Hull House, and shows their effects on the lives of those who participate.

*Play Materials for the Preschool Child. By Harriet M. Johnson. American Childhood, December 1930.*

"This is the first of two articles which Miss Johnson has written for the Magazine on the psychology of playthings."

*Psychoanalysis and Child Guidance. By Bernard Glueck. Mental Hygiene, October 1930.*

This article reviews "the bases for some of the more important prevailing principles that underlie the theory and practice of child guidance," and examines "their relation to psychoanalytic psychology."

*Religion and Ethics. By H. Richard Niebuhr. The World Tomorrow, November 1930.*

This article discusses the attempt to divorce religion and ethics, traces the reasons for this attempt and defends the position that the two are inseparable.

*Social Maladjustments (Emotional) in the Intellectually Normal. By Marion Kenworthy. Mental Hygiene, October 1930.*

A discussion is undertaken of emotional maladjustments in children, their causes and ways of preventing their occurrence.

## Cross-Sections of Childhood

(*Continued from page* 140)

### THIRTEENTH YEAR

In making a survey of this period, one conspicuous finding is that the amount of research material available is astonishingly small as compared with that for earlier periods.

**Physical Development**

Height and weight have now become almost as varied as they will be in adult life. This is the period, however, in which girls are likely to be taller and heavier than boys. Boys vary from fifty-two inches in height and sixty-four pounds in weight to sixty-seven inches in height and one hundred and twenty-four pounds weight. Girls vary between fifty-three inches in height and seventy-one pounds in weight to sixty-seven inches in height and one hundred and thirty-one pounds in weight. All of the teeth except the third molar (the wisdom tooth) have made their appearance. Most girls have by this time attained puberty, but boys are more likely to complete their pubertal development at fourteen or fifteen. Thirteen-year-old girls are actually much older in development and appearance than boys the same age; even their clothing must suddenly take on a more grown-up air.

**Intellectual Development**

Individual differences in intellectual capacity are becoming increasingly marked. Early adolescence is likely to include an apparent leveling out of mental development followed by rather sudden spurts in growth. There is evidence that these changes, like the physiological changes, are likely to be earlier for girls. They also seem to occur earlier for superior than for average children. For many there will not be much actual further increase in capacity, although training and skill will continue to show marked improvement in performance. School life is bringing wider contacts and is putting more and more responsibility upon the individual. In the junior high school he must learn sometimes rather suddenly to take care of himself.

**Social-Emotional Development**

In addition to this increase in personal responsibility, the thirteen-year-old is adjusting himself in many other ways. Frequently the influence of the home comes into conflict with outside interests or at least is overlaid for a time by the glamour of these new points of view. The club spirit of the previous years is becoming crystalized in such organizations as the Boy Scouts, The Campfire Girls, and so on. The interest in secrecy, in ritual, in pledges, and a tendency to hero worship all find their place in the activities of such groups. Games are played not only for fun but for the sake of team or school loyalty, and the individual is coming to put the group interest before his own. Boys and girls tend to play by themselves, but are more conscious of and interested in the opposite sex than before.

This period is particularly difficult to picture because, unlike either of the previous ones here selected to suggest the typical growth, it may include individuals in conspicuously different stages of development. This is equally true on the physical, intellectual and social sides. We have all seen the thirteen-year-old who is actually still a child physiologically, or intellectually, or socially, or all three. We also know the thirteen-year-old (more often perhaps a girl than a boy) who is astoundingly mature in one or all these phases of development. Between these two extremes the variations and combinations of potential variation are almost endless.

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CHILD STUDY, *July 1930—Child Development Research.*
*Published by Child Study Association of America.*

Guidance of Childhood and Youth.
*Compiled by Child Study Association of America. Edited by Benjamin C. Gruenberg. The Macmillan Co.* 324 *pp.* 1928.

Individual Differences (pamphlet).
*Published by Child Study Association of America.* 1930.

Infancy and Human Growth.
*By Arnold Gesell. The Macmillan Co.* 418 *pp.* 1928.

An Introduction to Child Study.
*By Ruth Strang. The Macmillan Co.* 550 *pp.* 1930.

Mental Growth and Decline.
*By H. L. Hollingworth. D. Appleton & Co.* 396 *pp.* 1928.

The Mental Growth of the Pre-School Child.
*By Arnold Gesell. The Macmillan Co.* 447 *pp.* 1925.

The Modern Baby Book and Child Development Record.
*By John E. Anderson and Florence L. Goodenough. The Parents' Publishing Association.* 398 *pp.* 1930.

The Psychology of Child Development.
*By Irving King. The University of Chicago Press.* 265 *pp.* 1904.

The Psychology of Childhood.
*By Naomi Norsworthy and Mary Theodore Whitley. The Macmillan Co.* 368 *pp.* 1918.

Psychology of the Junior High School Pupil.
*By L. A. Pechstein and A. Laura McGregor. Houghton Mifflin Co.* 280 *pp.* 1924.

The Psychology of Play Activities.
*By Harvey C. Lehman and Paul A. Witty. A. S. Barnes & Co.* 242 *pp.* 1927.

# Books for Children

***"The Year's Best"***

To select from the publishers' offerings of juveniles this year a list which might be called "the best" has been both a labor of love and a challenge.

In numbers alone the year's crop of juveniles has constituted a problem in reviewing, for the months of October and November literally *rained* children's books. In selecting its Christmas list* the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association reviewed some six hundred volumes. But aside from their staggering quantity, the fact that one hundred and sixty-five titles were included in this year's list—surviving most rigorous selective processes—bears evidence to the increasingly high standards that prevail in the current output of children's books.

In setting up any process which presumes to select books for children, any group is constantly challenged to state its criteria of selection. What, after all, is a good book? What are good books for children? What is *a* good book for *a* child? These are questions that admit of such wide variety of taste and judgment, that it is difficult to particularize. But even allowing for differences in individual preferences, certain generalizations are possible—for there are a few broad principles which must, in the last analysis, govern the making of all good books—for children as for adults. There are minimum essentials of format, literary style and integrity without which no book is a good book. And these constitute the primary guideposts — though not necessarily the outposts—to the Committee's choices.

In the format there is as a rule little room for controversy. Clear, well spaced, readable print set within adequate margins, good paper and suitable size—these are fundamental requisites that are readily judged. Of these one may say, with fair certainty, "good," "indifferent"—or worse. True, the publishers have learned the trick of fine end-papers and colorful jackets, but the discriminating are not to be put off. Good format must lie *between* the covers. Less discernable but not less pertinent is the question whether format matches text. What shall we say of the book whose delightful format sets out to catch the eye of the eight-year-old only to disappoint him with a text he can scarcely read, or with subject matter or humor so sophisticated that he understands it not at all? In such a book sheer loveliness of format is worse than useless, for it cheats the eight-year-old who covets it, while the older child who might enjoy its contents disdains its child-like exterior. The same is true of illustration.

Not that this problem of age-interest is always a simple one. What is real meat to one five-year-old may be just "pictures" to a less mature seven; and the favorite of one twelve-year-old is a "baby book" to another who is already dipping here and there into contemporary adult literature. Thus the classification of books by ages becomes a vexing question. Nevertheless, to meet the always recurring demand of parents and other people for "a good book" for a child of three or eight or thirteen, the Committee dares to suggest, in its lists, that certain books belong to certain ages. It does so, however, in all humility, fully aware of the wide margin of error.

The question of literary merit raises another set of difficulties. We may all agree that a good book must have at least a modicum of sincerity and charm, force and strength of delineation, good English style and distinction. But we all know, too, that children, like their elders, enjoy and even devour quantities of stories whose principal claim to distinction is a sustained tempo. These are the "thrillers." Certainly they are entertaining. Almost certainly they are harmless. Shall we, therefore, let down the bars of literary selection to give place to such books on the list? Or shall we, rather, assume that these the child will read, too—but that the list is still a guide to the "best"?

There are many other markers on the Committee's measuring stick. There are, for example, factors of emotional emphasis. Is the story true to the best elements of life? Or does it put a premium on the baser qualities of mankind, rewarding cunning and extolling deceit, glorifying cruelty and exploiting the meek? Do wishes come true for him who only stands and waits—or does the hero have to *earn* his rewards? Again there is the annual crop (fortunately growing smaller) of

* "A Selection of the Year's Best Books for Children," part of which appeared in the December issue of CHILD STUDY, is now ready for distribution in pamphlet form. Price ten cents.

books of high nationalism—wherein only one country can do no wrong. Happily these are offset by an increasing number of fine national pictures—authentic stories whose backgrounds have a rich flavor of other lands.

Obviously, not all of these criteria can apply to books of "things to do," and of pure information. Of books of this kind one may require only that they be accurate, clear and suitable for their audience.

These, then, briefly stated, are a few of the questions with which the Children's Book Committee approaches its selection of the books which seem to them to rank among "the year's best." This listing in no way purposes to limit the child's reading to the Committee's choices, nor can it presume to select *a* book for *a* child. The list is, rather, in the nature of a guide for parents and others who cannot, singly, read their way through the publishers' six hundred offerings to choose books for their children. In presenting its annual list, therefore, it is the Committee's function and its only purpose to call to the attention of parents, to whom inevitably falls the task of selecting much of their children's literary fare, those books of the year which are of outstanding worth.

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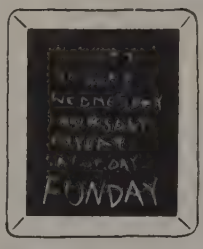


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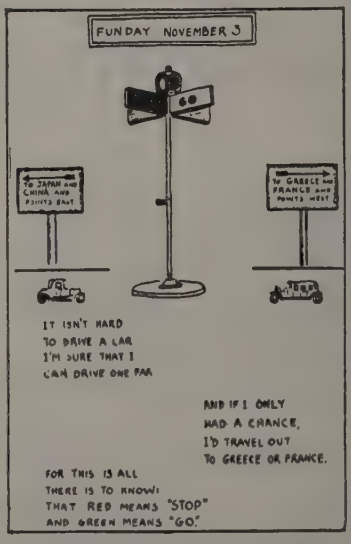
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# The Editors' Page

DEPENDABILITY, which we demand in human relationships, is something that has to be learned, just as all special skills, including language itself, have to be learned. The untruths that annoy and worry us so when they appear in children are for the most part errors, since lying is also something that the child has to acquire, rather than a manifestation of original sin. It is from these errors that the child has to learn first of all the difference between true and false statements and then the significance to him of the dependability of human beings.

THE needed lessons will not in most cases emerge automatically. Parents and teachers will have to help, not necessarily with explicit instruction or preaching, or with threats and penalties. It will usually be from our actual management of the young child, from our relations with him, that he will unconsciously learn whether honesty is indeed the better policy, or only something to dissemble on occasion.

AS the child extends his experience beyond the home he will need constant help in the interpretation and absorption of the many apparent inconsistencies which he cannot help but discover among the adults about him. There is the truth of form and the truth of effect. There is the truth of the spirit as well as the truth of the letter. Still more subtly must he be helped to evaluate the usages of the market place in relation to the standard of the home or other mutual group. Eventually there is need of acquiring out of the internal conflict of values an inner integrity that adapts means to ends without self-deception or stultification. Through every stage we have to look upon the child as in the process of becoming truthful, guiding him in his orientation, rather than sitting before him in the combined role of judge, jury and executioner.

Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg

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